

CLAIMS:

1. A method for distributing information content encoded as a plurality of layers comprising a base layer and an enhancement layer, such that the base layer is needed for reconstructing said information content, characterised by the steps of:
 - transmitting said enhancement layer by means of superdistribution;
 - 5 receiving a request for purchase, regarding at least a portion of said information content, from a user; and
 - in response to receiving the request, transmitting at least a portion of said base layer corresponding to said request to said user.
- 10 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of receiving a request comprises the steps of:
 - establishing a connection between the user and a server; and
 - receiving said request at said server via said connection.
- 15 3. The method according to claim 2, wherein said step of transmitting at least a portion of said base layer comprises the steps of:
 - detecting the reception of said request;
 - determining what specific information content the user requests to purchase;
 - and
 - 20 transmitting a base layer associated with said specific information content from the server to the user.
4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:
 - encrypting said enhancement layer before transmitting the same by means of
 - 25 superdistribution.
5. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of encrypting said at least a portion of the base layer before transmitting the same.

6. The method according to claim 4 or 5, further comprising the step of providing the user with a key for decrypting said encrypted layer.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the steps are performed over the Internet.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein a portion of the base layer is co-distributed with said enhancement layer.

9. A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium storing computer executable instructions for causing a computer to distribute information content encoded as a plurality of layers, which comprise a base layer and an enhancement layer, wherein the base layer is needed for reconstructing said information content, characterised in that said computer executable instructions when run on a computer causes the computer to perform the steps of:

transmitting said enhancement layer by means of superdistribution;
receiving a request for purchase, regarding at least a portion of said information content, from a user; and
in response to receiving the request, transmitting at least a portion of said base layer corresponding to said request to said user.

10. A system which is arranged for distributing information content encoded as a plurality of layers comprising a base layer and an enhancement layer, such that the base layer is needed for reconstructing said information content, characterised in that it comprises:

means for handling said information content;
a first server having means for transmitting said enhancement layer by means of superdistribution; and

a second server having means for receiving a request for purchase, regarding at least a portion of said information content, from a user; and means for, in response to receiving the request, transmitting at least a portion of said base layer corresponding to said request to said user.

11. The system according to claim 10, wherein said first and second servers are embodied by a single server device

12. The system according to claim 10, wherein said means for handling the information content are arranged to encode the information content into said plurality of layers.

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13. The system according to claim 10, wherein said means for handling the information content are arranged for receiving the information content encoded as said plurality of layers.

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14. A server for use in a system according to claim 10, the server comprising means for transmitting an enhancement layer by means of superdistribution.

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15. A server for use in a system as claimed in claim 10, the server comprising means for receiving a request for purchase, regarding at least a portion of an information content, from a user; and means for, in response to receiving the request, transmitting at least a portion of a base layer corresponding to said request to said user.

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16. A client system which is arranged for processing information content encoded as a plurality of layers comprising a base layer and an enhancement layer, such that the base layer is needed for reconstructing said information content, characterised in that it comprises:

means for receiving said enhancement layer;

means for transmitting a request for purchase, regarding at least a portion of said information content, to an information content vendor;

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means for receiving at least a portion of said base layer corresponding to said request; and

means for presenting said information content to a user by processing said at least a portion of said base layer and a corresponding portion of said enhancement layer.

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17. The client system according to claim 16, wherein said means for presenting said information content to a user comprises means for decoding said layers.

18. A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium storing computer executable instructions for causing a computer to process information content encoded as a plurality of layers, which comprise a base layer and an enhancement layer,

wherein the base layer is needed for reconstructing said information content, characterised in that said computer executable instructions when run on a computer causes the computer to perform the steps of:

- receiving said enhancement layer;
- 5 transmitting a request for purchase to an information content vendor;
- receiving at least a portion of said base layer corresponding to said request;
- and
- presenting said information content to a user by processing said at least a portion of said base layer and a corresponding portion of said enhancement layer.